



House Education Newsletter

MARCH 2006

The countdown continues.....

With Crossover Day looming just around the corner, life under the Gold Dome has been quite hectic! Crossover Day marks the 30th Legislative Day of the Session, and is the last day for new legislation to be introduced. In other words, any bill or resolution that does not pass the Chamber in which it was originated by Crossover Day will not be taken up by the General Assembly during that particular Legislative Session. As you can imagine, people at the Capitol have been really burning the midnight oil— holding lengthy committee meetings, heavy calendars for floor debate, and everything else that is necessary to make sure that as many issues are addressed

as possible.

This week in the Georgia House, lawmakers passed what is typically the most important legislation of the forty day session. Yet, they also found time



to begin the creation of a new city, aid in suicide prevention, and take the first steps in protecting the rights of property owners. Wednesday was a day where the House chamber seemed more like an economics lecture hall, when the House voted to

not only adopt a House and Senate compromise to the current Amended Budget, but also voted to pass the House's version of the 2006-2007 Budget . Both the compromise and new budgets are a strong reflection of the growing economy that Georgia has been experiencing over the past year. Even with the fuel and natural gas tax cuts that have been implemented, the legislature found itself with a surplus in revenue .

Story continued on page 3



Representative Brian Thomas



Now calling Lilburn, Georgia home, Freshman Representative Brian Thomas was born in Paterson, New Jersey and grew up in Miami, Florida. His quest for knowledge led him to live in other parts of the United States as well. In 1983, he earned his B.A. in History and Philosophy from Wofford College in Spartanburg, S.C. He later attended Wake Forrest University in Winston-Salem, N.C. earning a Master's in Anthropology. A few years later, he earned a Ph D. in Anthropology from the State University of New York at Binghamton.

His thirst for furthering his education led to his career in Archeology. He currently manages a Cultural Resources Company that provides ar-

chaeological, historical and architectural history services. The archeologist has also served in the military. From 1983-1987 he served active duty in the United States Army with the Military Intelligence Division. By the end of his active duty service, he had achieved the rank of Captain. He completed his service with Army Reserves in 2000 at the rank of Major.

His services under the Gold Dome include membership on the Education, Defense & Veteran's Affairs and Natural Resources & Environment Committees. He also holds membership on several community and civic organizations. Representative Thomas served as the President of the Georgia Council of Professional Archeologists from 2002-2004. He is currently an active presence on the Board of Directors for the Georgia Council of Professional Archaeologists, the American Cultural Resources Association

and the Georgia National Register Review Board. He is serving as a Historic Places and Archeological Sites Issue Leader for the Georgia Sierra Club. The Society for Georgia Archeology has made him the organization's Newsletter Editor since 2002.

He and his wife Larissa have been married since 1993.



Countdown continued...

Additionally, a favorable vote was given to establish of a suicide prevention program. Among the various components of the program will be the education of clergy, teachers, and corrections officers on early warning signs and counseling techniques. There are more suicides in Georgia than homicides. Last year 850 Georgians committed suicide and it is one of the leading causes of death among teenagers. The House also approved a War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission to coordinate with a similar commission on the federal

Working through the lunch hour on Thursday, the House moved decisively, taking one of its most anticipated actions of the session ... eminent domain, the power of governments to condemn private property in order to allocate the land for private or public use. The package, which was approved by an overwhelming vote, attacks the contentious issue on a statutory front and through a proposed constitutional amendment which requires an OK by state voters. An exhaustive and detailed measure,

House Bill 1313 establishes a litany of new procedures, including hearings, aimed at protecting land and homeowners from unfair condemnations. Voters will see the ballot question this coming November.

*Jenee' Burke
Brent Cranfield*

For more information on legislation taken up this year, check out our power point presentations on the Member Services page.



With the coming of the new season, be on the look out for some of our State Symbols to be in bloom!!!

*In 1979, the **Azalea** became the state wild-flower. Azaleas can be found covering much of our state and come in a variety of colors. These flowers bloom from March until August.*

Spring has Sprung!!

An interesting thing about these lovely flowers is that they are actually mildly poisonous!!! When these flowers are eaten by animals, they can cause stomach and heart problems.

While we're talking about flowers, don't forget another one of Georgia's symbols- the Honeybee! The Honeybee is not only the state insect of Georgia, but it's also the state insect of Kansas, Arkansas, Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Carolina,

Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont and Wisconsin!! Quite a popular insect!! The honeybee was chosen as our state insect in 1975 because of its contributions to Georgia through honey production and helping with pollination.

